

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

### **Claims 1-15 (Cancelled)**

**Claim 16 (Currently Amended)** A process for the preparation of chemically and optically highly pure (*R*)- and (*S*)- $\alpha$ -hydroxycarboxylic acids, which comprises treating the hydrolysis solution obtained by acidic hydrolysis of the (*R*)- and (*S*)-cyanohydrins, prepared by enzyme-catalyzed addition of a cyanide group donor to the corresponding aldehydes or ketones, directly with an aromatic hydrocarbon, optionally in combination with a cosolvent selected from the group consisting of ~~aldehydes ethers~~ and ketones, then extracting the mixture at hydrolysis temperature, whereupon after cooling of the organic phase the corresponding chemically and optically highly pure (*R*)- and (*S*)- $\alpha$ -hydroxycarboxylic acids having an optical purity of over 98%ee crystallize out.

**Claim 17 (Previously Presented)** The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein chemically and optically highly pure aromatic (*R*)- and (*S*)- $\alpha$ -hydroxycarboxylic acids of the formula Ar- $(\text{CH}_2)_n\text{CH}(\text{OH})\text{CO}_2\text{H}$  in which n is 0 or an integer from 1 to 5 and Ar is an aryl or heteroaryl radical which is unsubstituted or substituted by OH, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkyl or alkoxy, thioalkyl, halogen, optionally substituted phenyl or phenoxy, amino or nitro, are prepared.

**Claim 18 (Currently Amended)** The process as claimed in claim ~~11 or~~ 16, wherein toluene, xylene, benzene, ethylbenzene, isopropylbenzene or chlorobenzenes are employed as aromatic hydrocarbons.

**Claim 19 (Currently Amended)** The process as claimed in claim ~~11 or~~ 16, wherein the cosolvent employed is a solvent which increases the solubility of the hydroxycarboxylic acid in the organic phase and which is separable by distillation, in an amount from 5 to 50% by volume.

**Claim 20 (Cancelled)**

**Claim 21 (Currently Amended)** The process as claimed in claim 20 16 wherein the ether is tetrahydrofuran, methyl tert-butyl ether or dimethoxyethane.

**Claim 22 (Currently Amended)** The process according to claim 20 16 wherein the ketone is methylisobutyl ketone.

**Claim 23 (Cancelled)**